

SUPPORT FOR THE AMENDMENTS

This Amendment amends Claim 52; and adds new Claims 62-63. Support for the amendments is found in the specification and claims as originally filed. In particular, support for Claim 52 is implicit in the specification at least at [0046]-[0050]. Support for new Claim 62 is found in Claim 55. Support for new Claim 63 is found in the specification at least at [0009]-[0011]. No new matter would be introduced by entry of these amendments.

Upon entry of these amendments, Claims 52 and 54-63 will be pending in this application. Claim 52 is independent.

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION

Applicants respectfully request entry of the foregoing and reexamination and reconsideration of the application, as amended, in light of the remarks that follow.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the courtesies extended to their representative during the personal interview on April 29, 2008.

As discussed at the personal interview, the present invention provides a method of treating an etched dielectric film in order to perform at least one of healing, sealing and cleansing of the dielectric film. Specification at [0001].

Claims 52 and 54-61 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0089988 ("Matsuura").

Matsuura discloses dry etching a first low permittivity interlayer insulating film 24, which can be made from hydrogen silsesquioxane or methyl silsesquioxane, to form a wiring trench 26. Matsuura at [0040], [0079], [0083]. On the etched wall surface of the wiring trench 26 is formed a first insulating film 27a, which can be a silicon carbide film formed by *plasma* CVD from a raw material gas containing OMCTS or TMCTS. Matsuura at [0060], [0062]-[0064], [0084].

However, Matsuura fails to suggest the independent Claim 52 limitations of "etching a portion of said dielectric film so as to form in said dielectric film a sidewall surface; and exposing said sidewall surface to at least one of TMCTS and OMCTS in a *non-plasma* environment".

Thus, the rejection over Matsuura should be withdrawn.

Claim 62 is further patentably distinguishable over the cited prior art, because Matsuura is silent about a chlorine containing material and fails to suggest the Claim 62 limitations of "exposing said sidewall surface to a chlorine containing material". A chlorine containing material (e.g., TMCS) is an effective treating compound for the passivation of low-k dielectric material surfaces in both wet bench conditions and under supercritical processing conditions. Specification at [0044], [0078].

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the application is in condition for allowance. Applicants respectfully request favorable consideration and prompt allowance of the application.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further is necessary in order to place the application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

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